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The research concerned differences within a basically rural low-income population on changes for social mobility. Mobility potential referred to differential chances for moving from a status of economic dependency to one of self-sufficiency. Two aspects of mobility potential, individual and situational, were conceptualized as influencing movement through mobility channels. Socioeconomic, demographic, and attitudinal data were collected in structured interviews with 231 female AFDC (Aid For Dependent Children) recipients selected from welfare roles in 2 Mississippi counties. Correlational analysis was used to compare the interview data with scores on a five-item index of mobility potential. Comparisons indicated that the AFDC population was generally homogeneous in socioeconomic status and life styles. However, differences between high and low mobility potential groups were found on the following psychological characteristics: (1) individuals with high mobility potential were not adjusted to their present life situation, showed a desire toward conformity to general societal norms and values, and had greater feelings of isolation than those with low mobility potential; and (2) individuals with low mobility potential were adjusted to their life situation and placed great value upon security. (Author/TL)

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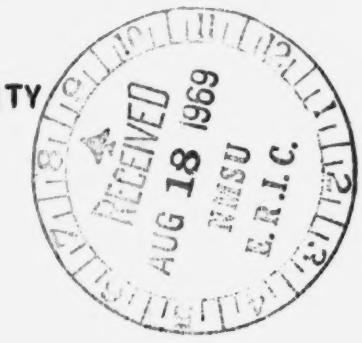

DIFFERENCES IN POTENTIAL FOR MOBILITY OF AFDC MOTHERS IN RURAL AREAS*

by
Peggy Johnston Ross

ABSTRACT

The research concerned differences within a basically rural low-income population on chances for social mobility. Mobility potential, referred to differential chances for moving from a status of economic dependency to one of self-sufficiency. Two types of factors -- (1) personal or individual and (2) situational -- were conceptualized as influencing an individual's mobility potential.

Data were drawn from information collected in structured interviews with 231 female AFDC recipients selected from welfare rolls in two Mississippi counties and consisted of a wide range of socio-economic, demographic and attitudinal material.

The first analytical phase focused on identification of the components of mobility potential in the AFDC population and the construction of a composite index through the use of factor analysis. In the second phase the relationship between mobility potential and selected variables representing various aspects of the life situation of the population's members was explored. Considered were socio-economic characteristics, life styles, association patterns and perceptions and opinions about self and others.

Findings revealed that the AFDC population was generally homogeneous in terms of socio-economic standing and life styles. Several distinctive differences between high and low mobility potential groups were noted on psychological characteristics. The major findings deduced from the analysis were:

(1) Individuals with high mobility potential were not adjusted to their present life situation, showed a desire toward conformity to general societal norms and values, and had greater feelings of isolation than those with low mobility potential.

(2) Individuals with low mobility potential were adjusted to their life situation, and placed great value upon security, or "getting by" rather than "getting ahead."

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Introduction

An emphasis on achievement, which in sociological language often refers to vertical social mobility, is one of the most striking features of the American way. An individual experiences vertical mobility by altering any one of the characteristics which determine his ranking in the stratification structure, e.g., his occupational status, the amount of education he has, his income, or his style of life. Mobility also results when a particular occurrence changes the prestige, and in turn the social rank, of all the members of a group. Mobility is in evidence in all historical societies, but especially in America has personal success become an ideology preached to all.

The historical character of the nation has contributed to some extent to the mobility ethic becoming a part of the cultural ethos. For many of the early settlers, a protestant religious orientation placed great value on hard work and personal accomplishment. The settling of the West offered tremendous opportunities to acquire land and economic gains. A desire "to better their lot" prompted people all over the world to immigrate to the land of opportunity. Finally, the rapid rate of industrialization and continued technological advancement opened up new positions permitting entire groups to move upward.

In contemporary America, forces still operate to maintain a high rate of mobility.[1] However, it is misleading to suggest that the life chances are the same for all groups. One's social position at birth is an important determining factor for mobility chances.

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1. Natalie Rogoff, Recent Trends in Occupational Mobility (Glencoe: Free Press, 1953), p. 106.

While life chances for vertical mobility are different for individuals of dissimilar social rank, variation in life chances may also be found for persons of the same social rank. Many types of factors contribute to such variations. For example, race is a variable which should be considered in understanding variations in life chances for achievement. The Negro element of the American population has not risen as rapidly as the white. The majority of white Americans fall into the middle class, but the majority of Negro-Americans are classified as lower class.[2]

Life chances for mobility are treated in this study in terms of a basic concept, mobility potential. The term mobility potential is used to denote life chances of an individual to attain mobility compared to those of other individuals of the same or similar life situation. Past research in mobility supplies material in defining the concept.

The following general assumptions are made as a basis for the frame of reference of this study:

1. Mobility potential is a multi-dimensional phenomenon.
2. Mobility potential varies for comparisons made with (a) persons of the same or similar social rank and (b) persons with different social ranks. One who has high potential relative to others of the same station in life may have low or medium potential relative to individuals in other social strata.
3. Mobility potential varies over time. Any change that alters one's position relative to those factors which determine mobility may affect one's potential.

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2. Earl H. Bell and John Sirjamaki, Social Foundations of Human Behavior (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 454-456.

4. The components of potential vary with social rank; education or training may be very important to one of lesser social rank, but less important for the very wealthy.[3]

Based on these observations, two analytically distinct and empirically discernible aspects of mobility potential should be noted. The first of these refers to factors pertinent to the individual which enable or hinder his movement through mobility channels. These individual factors are those qualities and conditions which serve as personal resources for mobility. A second aspect of mobility potential consists of larger institutional or environmental conditions which permit or hamper the individual from using his personal mobility resources, but work together with the latter to influence actual mobility.

Factors in Mobility Potential

Individual factors in mobility potential are qualities, conditions, and characteristics of the individual which enable or impede mobility. These factors may be inherent, ascribed, learned or achieved. By examining the individual's socio-economic profile, behavior, and psychological and personality characteristics, it is possible to identify individual factors.

An individual is born with innate qualities, skills, and talents which

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3. Mobility is defined as movement from one social position to another. One's social position or rank in this study is defined as ascending to the value theory of stratification (see, Kaufman et. al., op. cit., p. 6). A person's social rank is an evaluation of statuses, qualities, possessions of the individual according to the major values of the society. The values in a particular society may cluster together around an institutional complex. For example, in the United States, social rank is largely determined as an economic base rather than a religious or political one. Therefore, components of social rank are such factors as income, education, occupation, participation and level of aspiration (see, Ibid.). Each component of social rank serves as a channel or means by which mobility is accomplished. These components may be viewed, in most cases, as necessary conditions for mobility.

affect his mobility chances. Included are attributes such as general intelligence, unusual talent, physical beauty or uniqueness. Entertainers, athletes, and geniuses illustrate inherent mobility resources. The individual also has ascribed characteristics which influence his mobility. Age and sex are two important factors as well as group memberships. Education, wealth, and power illustrate achieved qualities which influence mobility. Finally, an important aspect of individual factors in mobility potential is psychological and refers to an aspirational-motivational drive exemplified in attitudes, values, strivings, and opinions.

Factors elaborated above concern the individual as a unique being, born with or acquiring personal resources to become mobile. The individual cannot be treated apart from his environment, and environmental factors operate in varying degree to influence mobility potential. For example, differential birth rates between social classes control the number of new positions opening up at different class levels. Technological and scientific advancement affect occupational structure by opening up a need for new jobs, and closing out others. As an individual must have necessary outlets for utilizing his personal resources, occupational opportunities as well as the social mileu which sanctions his right to pursue goals to the fullest use of his individual resources must be taken into account. Historical changes manifested in economic and political crises are further examples of situational conditions which hamper or facilitate an individual in using his personal mobility resources. To illustrate, persons entering young adulthood during the late 1920's and early 1930's were hampered in their mobility chances by the economic depression which occurred in this country. Similarly, war has an effect on mobility opportunities. Serious strife which hits a country can wreck chances for some, or other individuals, not ordinarily mobility prone,

can become mobile through prestige attached to military positions, or through capitalizing on the unfortunate situation, as exemplified by black marketeers.

These two dimensions of mobility potential--the individual and the situational--operate to influence mobility potential. However, the relative importance they play in determining mobility changes may be heavily weighted toward either the individual or the situational aspects. Sherif and Sherif[4] point out relative contribution to psychological structuring (or behavior) of individual factors, external and internal, and the stimulus or situational situation. When the environment (or situation) is more structured and fewer alternatives are opened to the individual, the situational or structural conditions are more important in determining outcome. In less structured situations where alternatives are numerous, individual factors carry the greater influence.

Situation and individual cannot be thought of as independent phenomena. There is an interplay between the two dimensions. Personal factors may be determined by awareness of situational alternatives. If few alternatives are open to the individual, his aspiration level or motivation may be low. Conversely, if many alternatives are opened in terms of job opportunities, economic gain, etc., the push to acquire personal mobility resources may be intensified.

To get an adequate assessment of mobility potential both individual and situational factors must be taken into account. It is also important to consider the interaction between these two dimensions. However, this study is restricted empirically to a consideration of individual factors in mobility potential. Though the term mobility potential is employed throughout the study, it refers to only one aspect of the theoretical construct.

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4. Muzafer and Carolyn Sherif, An Outline of Social Psychology, (New York, Evanston: Harper and Row, 1956), pp. 77-116.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine differences in mobility chances within an AFDC population. The aims are enumerated below.

1. The first objective is to delineate conceptually mobility potential in general terms identifying the kinds of factors which are necessary to an understanding of the theoretical construct.
2. Secondly, the analysis proceeds to examine variables which are indicative of individual factors in mobility potential for an AFDC population. The intent is to develop an index which will serve as a unidimensional measure of mobility potential.
3. A third objective is to explore the relationship between the index and variables which represent many aspects of the total life situation of these people.

Individual Factors in Mobility Potential

What variables are the best indicators of factors associated with the individual which enable or hinder mobility? Mobility for individuals in this population constitutes minimally movement from a state of economic dependency to one of economic self-sufficiency. Variables which serve as indicators of individual factors relevant to such movement must include both objective and subjective[5] attributes of the individual. On the basis of logic and previous research six variables were selected to represent objective and subjective attributes of AFDC recipients as personal

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5. Negative as well as positive psychological factors have been related to predisposition toward mobility in recent empirical studies. See August B. Hollingshead, et al., "Social Mobility and Mental Illness," American Sociological Review, 19 (October, 1954), pp. 577-584; Gerald O. Windham, "Pre-Adult Socialization and Selected Achievement Variables," Social Forces, 42 (May, 1964), pp. 456-459; Peter M. Blau, "Social Mobility and Interpersonal Relations," American Sociological Review, 21 (June, 1956), pp. 290-295; and Evelyn Ellis, "Social Psychological Correlates of Upward Social Mobility Among Unmarried Career Women," American Sociological Review, 17 (October, 1952), pp. 558-563.

resources for mobility potential. These include (1) general intelligence, (2) age, (3) education, (4) health, (5) occupational aspirations, and (6) achievement motivation.

General Intelligence

Kahl[6] argues that intelligence along with social status accounts for major variations in aspirational levels. General intelligence must be considered as relevant to mobility for all socio-economic levels. Especially at the low-income level of AFDC clients does it operate to influence mobility chances.

Ideally, one of the more sophisticated measures of innate intelligence would be preferred, but because of administrative problems,[7] a short, easily administered, and quickly scored non-verbal test[8] was used in conjunction with the initial interview with the clients. The scores yielded by the test were in the form of both raw score and stanine ranking, and provide measures[9] of differences in learning aptitudes among the clients. The former, raw scores, with greater range were more differentiating and have

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6. Joseph A. Kahl, The American Class Structure, op. cit., p. 288.

7. Such a test requires a laboratory setting under the direction of trained personnel, and requires considerable time. This was neither appropriate nor feasible for the broader study.

8. The test used was the industrial edition of the non-verbal test designed by Science Research Associates as an index of general intelligence in terms of ability to learn job operations, to grasp intangibles, to think creatively. Correlation tests have been run between the SRA Non-Verbal and Wechsler Intelligence Test indicating that the Non-Verbal which contains less culturally biased material gives a fair estimate of the learning ability of Negroes. See "Examiner Manual, SRA Verbal and Non-Verbal Forms--Industrial Edition," Science Research Associates, Inc., Chicago.

9. Some skepticism arose concerning the reliability of such a test administered in a home setting. As a reliability check, the test was re-administered to a sub-sample of 22 in a classroom situation and test scores on first and second administrations correlate with the rho of .76, significant $<.01$ level.

been used in this study. It must be stressed that this test, which is oriented toward industrial use, is not a pure I-Q measure, in terms of mental age, but serves merely as an indicator of differences in a population as to general learning aptitude.

Age

Age is another variable which has frequently been found to be associated with individual mobility. In a culture where emphasis is on youth, the aging generally have fewer opportunities for advancement. Also as one grows older his attitudes and values often become so fixed he is much less likely to assimilate the way of life of a new and higher social rank.[10] Reissman,[11] in his study of the relationship between social class and aspiration, says that age must be treated as an important intervening variable.

Education

Kahl[12] describes education as the most important single factor for mobility at all socio-economic levels. This he attributes to the atmosphere of equality and communication which allows all persons, regardless of class, to pursue educational aims.[13] Education is represented by number of years of schooling completed.

Health

Health is perhaps a more crucial mobility variable for persons of low social strata than for middle or upper social strata. Gordon[14] observes,

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10. Milton W. Gordon, Assimilation in American Life, Chapter 8 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 244-245.

11. Leonard Reissman, "Levels of Aspiration and Social Class," American Sociological Review, 18 (June, 1953), pp. 233-242.

12. Kahl, op. cit., p. 281.

13. Ibid.

14. Margaret Gordon, Poverty in America (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1965), p. 65.

for example, that a sizeable portion of impoverished adults are beyond self-help due to chronic illness or mental defect.

Health is an important consideration for low-income individuals for several reasons. First, the low-income persons are generally more vulnerable to ill health due to their living conditions. They often give little attention to disease prevention, and once problems arise appropriate medical care is postponed or unavailable. Poor health has been noted not only as a cause of individual public dependency, but as a contributing factor to intergenerational poverty.[15]

Two measures of health were utilized in this study. The first consisted of the scored response to the question, "Does your health prevent you from working?" A positive response received a score of zero, a negative response a score of one. A second health measure was an assessment[16] of case records maintained by the county welfare office which contain medical reports attested to by doctors and notations by caseworkers of the clients' physical and mental well-being. Two measures were used because the former may have been attitudinally oriented, reflecting a work value rather than a direct indication of physical state-of-being.

Aspiration

There is a large and growing body of literature which deals with the relationship between level of aspiration and vertical mobility. All evidence points toward the conclusion that an individual will be mobile only to the extent that he desires to be mobile. The work of several researchers

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15. Lola M. Irelan, Low-Income Life Styles, op. cit.

16. The evaluation was done by members of the research team who evaluated all available medical records and assessed the respondent as having serious health problems (scored zero), some health problems (scored one), or no serious problems (scored two).

with low-income groups support the claim that aspiration is indeed an important aspect of mobility. Chinoy's[17] findings indicate that aspirations of automobile workers tend to be what the individual has been socialized to believe about his status and the chances and desirability of altering it. Similarly, Douvan[18] relates the socialization process to aspiration and in turn to social mobility. Contrary to this, findings by Dunkelberger[19] suggest that male, rural, low-income household heads possess high levels of latent occupational aspiration.

The measure of aspiration used in this study consists of responses to, "What job would you like to be doing five years from now?" The replies are ranked using Alba-Edwards scale, with scores zero to nine assigned the ranked categories.

Achievement Motivation

The desire for mobility is not sufficient for a potentially mobile individual. He must also possess a psychological orientation or predisposition toward mobility which serves as the implementing force. This may be manifested in different ways in terms of values, goals, and sacrifices. Nonetheless all the elements of this predisposition may be subsumed under the general notion of achievement motivation. Achievement motivation reflects the ability to set goals and strive to attain them and the self-reliance to

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17. Ely Chinoy, "The Traditions of Opportunity and Aspirations of Automobile Workers," American Journal of Sociology, 57 (March, 1952), p. 459.

18. Elizabeth Douvan and Joseph Addison, "The Psychodynamics of Social Mobility in Adolescent Boys," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 56 (1958), p. 44.

19. John Dunkelberger, Intensity of Job Mobility Aspirations Among Household Heads in Low-Income Areas of the Rural South, (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Mississippi State University, June, 1965), p. 176.

operate independently.[20] Mack and McElrath suggest that attitudes are reflected in behavior patterns, and that those persons most likely to be upwardly mobile are those who actively seek to achieve upward mobility.[21]

The measure of achievement motivation was a cumulative scale using responses to 10 conditions qualifying the statement:

> Suppose you were offered a job with a chance to make a good income--say $300-400 a month, would you or wouldn't you favor making the change if it meant that:
> You would have to work at night instead of in the daytime.
> You would have to be away from the family for some time.
> Your family would have to move around the country a lot.
> You would have to leave your community.
> You would have to leave your friends in this community.
> You would have to give up your spare time.
> You would have to keep quiet about your political views.
> Your health would be endangered.
> You would have to work harder than you do now.
> You would have to take on more responsibility.

This scale has been used by several researchers including Reissman,[22] who developed the scale, Dunkelberger[23] and others.

Development of the scale consisted of assignment of responses to dichotomous categories, positively motivated toward work or negatively motivated toward work. Lack of information and answers of undecided were included in the negative category. The Guttman scale analysis technique was used to ascertain which of the items form an acceptable scale.[24] All ten items met

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20. Bernard C. Rosen, "Race, Ethnicity and the Achievement Syndrome," American Sociological Review, 24 (February, 1959), p. 47.

21. Raymond W. Mack and Dennis C. McElrath, "Urbanization and Differentiation," in Ephraim N. Muzchruzi, ed., The Substance of Sociology, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), p. 358.

22. Reissman, op. cit., p. 240.

23. Dunkelberger, op. cit., p. 44.

24. The Guttman Scaling technique, which is widely used, will not be elaborated here. Two resources aided in Guttman scaling, and criteria outlined in these articles were utilized in determining scalability. See Carol L. Stone, A Machine Method for Scaling as Many as Twelve Dichotomies, Circular 329, Washington Agricultural Experiment Station, Pullman, 1958, and Robert N. Ford, "A Rapid Scoring Procedure for Scaling Attitude Question," Public Opinion Quarterly, VIX, No. 3 (Fall, 1950), pp. 507-532.

six criteria for acceptability as scale items. The coefficient of reproducibility was .9325. The order of the items, number of persons responding favorably, and percent of error by item is found in Table 5·1. The final scale included all ten items, and scale scores from zero to ten were assigned to the respondents.

Table 5·1. Order of items in achievement motivation scale, percent favorable, and percent of error by item.

Item	Number Favorable (N=231)	Rank in Scale	Percent of Error
Working nights rather than days	175	1	11.54
Giving up spare time	170	2	3.39
Remaining quiet on political views	164	3	8.73
Working harder	159	4	7.79
Taking on more responsibility	158	5	7.79
Leaving your friends	143	6	4.76
Leaving your community	105	7	4.26
Being apart from family	79	8	10.68
Moving around country a lot	61	9	5.99
Endangering health	14	10	1.08

Construction of the Index

A composite index was chosen as the most desirable way to combine the indices discussed above into a single measure. Factor analysis was used to verify the undimensionality of the items and to develop the weighted index.[25] However, the factor analytical solution revealed a separate health factor influencing mobility potential. First, it was interesting to note that neither age, general intelligence nor education were significantly associated with health factor. Therefore health must, for an AFDC population, be a contingent factor which serves solely to influence chances for mobility

25. For a detailed description of how the factor analysis was used, see Peggy J. Ross, op. cit., pp. 25-30.

regardless of other resources the individual may have. As long as the health problem exists, potential for mobility is practically nil. Based on these observations, the health of each of the respondents was systematically studied considering both health indices and 29 cases were dropped from this study of mobility potential. The weighted index was then constructed with five variables which correlated with the mobility potential factor, using the correlation as weighting devices. The index scores for 202 AFDC recipients ranged from +4.4128 to -5.2814.[26] The index scores were ranked, and four ordinal groups were derived using quartile approximations. Table 5·2 shows the four categories and the range of scores for each group.

Table 5·2. Index Scores combined by quartile approximation.

	Mobility Potential Quartile Group				
	High			Low	
Range of Scores	Group I (N=50)	Group II (N=51)	Group III (N=50)	Group IV (N=51)	Total (N=202)
Upper Limit	+4.4128	+1.8020	+ .5271	-1.774	+4.4128
Lower Limit	+1.8027	+ .5312	-1.1696	-5.2814	-5.2814

Mobility Potential Associated with Selected Factors

The variables examined in the correlated analysis covered the gamut of many aspects of the total life situation of the AFDC population. Considered were socio-economic characteristics, life styles, association patterns, and perceptions and opinions about self and others.

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26. In assigning index scores, Hagood's method was followed. This utilizes factor leadings to weight items in a single index score. The items were weighted (in standard score form) in proportion to their correlation with the property being measured (see Ibid., pp. 31-32 for details).

A summary of relationship between the seiected factors and mobility potential quartile groups is presented in Table 3. More complete tables showing all the categories of each variable considered and their relation with the mobility potential groups are shown in Appendix I. The Table 5·3 presents only those categories of the variables which show sharp differences when cross tabulated with the mobility potential groups.

Variables	Mobility Potential Quartile Groups All	I	II	III	IV	χ^2 Value	df	P
A. Family Background								
1. Grew up with natural parents	64	56	59	72	68	10.487	9	.05
2. Parental Family on Welfare	12	20	14	10	4	12.966	6	.05
3. Reared in Rural Setting	85	74	80	88	96	10.636	3	.2
B. Socioeconomic and Demographic								
1. Annual income less than $499	76	74	85	81	64	12.874	12	NS
2. Indebtedness of $200 or less	52	46	65	60	35	22.777	12	.05
3. Dependent on Welfare less than 2 years	43	66	44	36	26	39.361	12	.001
4. Receipt of Welfare Aid besides AFDC	7	2	6	10	7	3.332	3	.05
5. Never married	32	51	33	24	22	33.945	12	.001
6. Non-marriage as reason for AFDC grant	39	53	39	42	23	24.160	12	.01
7. Worked some time in jobs other than farm of domestic labor	27	44	29	20	13	14.789	6	.05
C. Life Style								
1. High level of living scores (7-12)	11	20	4	6	14	15.961	9	NS
2. Yard well kept	42	38	43	47	31	12.814	9	NS*
3. Residence clean and in good repair	36	46	54	34	8	35.541	12	.001
4. Value of Residence $2000 or over	32	32	44	42	12	17.910	6	.01
5. Purchased Food Stamps	61	38	71	62	75	17.072	3	.001

Variables	Mobility Potential Quartile Groups All	I	II	III	IV	X^2 Value	df	P
D. Interaction								
1. Had contact with 5 or more organizations	31	44	33	34	12	15.926	6	.02
2. Had contact with 5 or more siblings	52	46	66	59	36	66.019	21	.001
3. High leisure time score	19	26	23	14	12	13.642	6	.05
E. Value and Attitudes								
1. Aspired oldest child to have college degree	49	60	50	54	31	9.362	3	.05
2. Expected oldest child to have college degree	28	34	30	31	15	9.362	3	.05
3. High isolation score (5-7)	22	38	22	10	18	18.347	6	.01
4. High Powerlessness score (4-6)	56	50	77	56	53	14.979	9	NS
5. Would prefer children to have secure job with moderate pay	78	63	80	76	94	14.070	6	.05
6. Prefer welfare check over job paying more money	19	12	4	20	39			.01
7. High Anti-client score	44	40	49	44	41	0.998	3	NS
8. High Anti-agency score	23	36	31	18	8	14.979	6	.05

*But there was significant difference between groups I and IV.

Synopsis of Findings

Summarized below are the major findings according to the factors to which they apply.

Family Background

(1) Though the data were limited, findings indicated that clients in Groups I and II, the higher mobility potential groups, may have been reared in a less stable family milieu than those in Groups III and IV. A greater number of those in I and II grew up with a parental arrangement other than a natural father and mother. Also more received welfare as a child.

(2) The lowest mobility potential group consisted almost entirely of persons reared in rural settings.

Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics

(1) Non-significant relationships indicated that the AFDC recipients were generally homogeneous in terms of socio-economic standing. They were all at the same low-income level. However, a larger number of Group IV owed no debts.

(2) Group IV had been receiving welfare assistance for the longest period of time. Also, a larger percentage of Groups III and IV received other assistance in addition to AFDC.

(3) Percentage distributions revealed that a significant proportion of Group I members had never been married. This is in contrast to Group IV where the majority were married, separated or widowed. Related to marital status were differences among the groups as to reasons for receiving welfare. Non-marriage of mother was the principal reason for the grant in Group I; desertion or disability in Group IV.

(4) It was found that in comparison with the others a substantially greater number of Group I had worked at some time in jobs other than farm or domestic labor.

Life Styles

(1) In keeping with the findings concerning socio-economic standing, no differences were detected among the groups on level of living.

(2) However, the findings consistently supported the conclusion that the lowest mobility potential group tended not to clean and care for their possessions as well as did respondents in other groups.

(3) Percentage distributions revealed that Group I tended to participate less in welfare-sponsored programs such as the food stamp program.

Interaction

(1) As a whole, the AFDC respondents participated little in organizations and groups. They were involved in few formal activities outside the church, and informal participation was limited to contacts with family and friends.

(2) However, Group I members showed a willingness toward participation by visiting more in friends' homes and pursuing more activities during leisure time. They were also more aware of community affairs through increased contact with organizations.

Attitudes and Values

(1) Mobility potential was found to be associated with educational aspirations and expectations for the oldest child. Twice as many Group I members aspired to a college education for their child as did Group IV members. Similar findings were obtained regarding expectations.

(2) Though mobility potential was not significantly associated with occupational aspirations and expectations, it is likely that a more discriminating measure would have detected differences in this area. Nonetheless, the data suggest a tendency for Group I to have higher occupational aspirations but lower and perhaps more realistic expectations for their children.

(3) Group I members demonstrated higher feelings of isolation, as measured by a seven item attitude scale, than did the other groups.

(4) The value attached to security by members of Group IV was demonstrated when 94 percent chose security and a moderate income for their child over a high-risk but high-paying job. A greater number of Group IV selected a welfare check over a job paying more money.

(5) Groups III and IV had much more favorable attitudes toward the welfare system and the assistance agency. Members of these groups also

perceived that secondary-relation contacts such as landlords, grocers, etc., thought more, rather than less, of them because they were receiving welfare.

Conclusions

To facilitate making general inferences from the findings reported above, comparisons are noted between those with a tendency toward high or low mobility potential.[27] The literature has frequently noted that lower class persons often lack the motivational drives required to be mobile. Referring to Table 6, of all the components of the mobility potential index the difference in median achievement motivation was the most striking difference between the mobility potential groups. Rosen[28] defines this personality complex as the achievement syndrome consisting of desires to be mobile (or aspirations), motivation, and values which supply the impetus of motivation. It is in this area of psychological characteristics that several distinctive differences between high and low mobility potential groups can be inferred from the results of the correlational analysis. The observations presented below tend to support the general conclusion that the high mobility potential group possesses personal resources for mobility if suitable alternatives are opened in their environment to permit mobility.

Adjustment to Life Situation

The findings suggest that high and low mobility potential groups are markedly different in their attitudes toward and therefore their adjustment to the status of economic dependency. A great deal of research has focused upon the importance of attitudes, and values imparted to the child during

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27. The fact that either Group I or Group IV was substantially different accounted in large part for the relationships between variables and the measure of mobility potential! In a few instances, similarities were noted for Groups I and II as compared to Groups III and IV.

28. Rosen, op. cit., pp. 48-60.

the socialization period as motivated resources for mobility. At the middle and upper social strata, stability in family provides the setting for inculcation of the child with aspirations and values which supply impetus toward achievement. Yet in the lower-class situation, stability of family life produces low levels of achievement drive and a tendency toward complacency or adjustment to the social milieu. The findings of AFDC clients showed that those with high mobility potential, more of whom were reared in less stable families, tended to resent their welfare status, and even be antagonistic toward the assistance agency.[29] However, adjustment to their status of economic dependency was evidenced for the low mobility potential group. They had favorable attitudes toward the welfare agency, preferred the security of a welfare check over a job, and were more involved in welfare-related activities.

Values

There are some who support the idea that lower-class individuals remain in the lower-class because they are part of a value system which supports and maintains the status quo.[30] There are others who argue that the values and beliefs of the lower-class are within the mainstream of the larger culture. Rather views have been expounded which maintain that lower class values are the result of stretch of the general value system as a defense mechanism in the face of deprived circumstances.[31] The findings regarding high and low mobility potential groups tend to support both viewpoints.

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29. Kronick, op. cit., p. 77, observed similar conditions in her study of AFDC families. She notes that families with the highest aspirations find adjustment to dependency most difficult.

30. See Herbert H. Hyman, "The Value Systems of Different Classes: A Social Psychological Contribution to the Analysis of Stratification" in Bendix and Lipset, Class, Status, and Power (The Free Press, 1966), pp. 426-442.

31. See Hyman Rodman, "The Lower Class Value Stretch," Social Forces, 42 (December 1963), p. 209.

Evidence for the high mobility potential group indicates a desire toward conformity to general societal norms and values, yet their actions characterized values identified with lower-class. They showed a willingness to participate more than the lower mobility potential group and were in greater contact with the community. They also had more debts, which according to Miller[32] indicates an attempt to accomplish the same level of consumption as those at a higher level.

But the findings on marital status are in direct contrast to values of the larger society. A significantly higher proportion of this group had never married and had borne one of more illegitimate children.[33] Rodman[34] purports that high illegitimacy rates are not an indication that stable marriages are not valued, but rather represent the value stretch theory. While it is only speculative, the mother-centered family orientation of many high mobility potentials may have had a bearing on attitudes toward marriage. It is not improbable that males came and went as transients from the home, therefore males were identified as having no right to be recognized as family head without making substantial contributions to the household. It may be for the lower class Negro woman, it is a gamble to marry and risk losing control over low, but stable, income. But the need for love and companionship leads to brief nonlegal unions.

For persons with low mobility potential, the value system is dominated by an emphasis on security. They preferred a welfare check over a job;

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32. S. M. Miller, et. al., "Poverty and Self-Indulgence: A Critique of the Non-deferred Gratification Pattern" in Louis Tarman, et. al., (eds.), Poverty in America, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965).

33. Daniel P. Moynihan, The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1967). He reports that official illegitimacy rates are higher for low socio-economic status groups and especially high for Negroes.

34. Rodman, op. cit., p. 209.

they chose security and low pay over economic success with risks for their child. The major concern was "getting by" rather than "getting ahead," a pattern frequently associated with the poor.

Feelings of Alienation

Individuals with high mobility potential were found to have a greater feeling of isolation, as if they were cut off from their communities. It might be argued that feelings of alienation would be incompatible with a desire to conform to the values of the larger society. However, feelings of isolation may be related to frustration encountered when channels are not open to attain the goals of the larger society with which lower class persons are presumed by Merton[35] for example, to identify. Accordingly, lower scores on the isolation measure for persons with low mobility potential may be due to their apparent resignation to social deprivation. For example, lack of interest in cleanliness of their homes indicates something of a tendency toward despair.

Implications

The findings which have been reviewed in regard to mobility potential of AFDC clients have both practical and scientific implications. Before proceeding with elaboration of the implications, certain limitations of the study should be noted. First, relatively little work had been done using the construct, mobility potential, and the conceptual framework of the study had to be built from a sketchy background. There were few previous findings on which to develop hypotheses. On the basis of logic and prior knowledge about mobility, factors were selected to represent mobility potential.

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35. See Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1957), pp. 161-194.

In addition, the study was faced with problems most studies encounter when secondary data are used. Some of the measures are less precise than had they been part of a primary design. Size of the sample and level of measurement restricted, in some respects, statistical analysis. The nature of the sample narrowed the scope of generalizations, to AFDC recipients in Mississippi or at the most to AFDC populations selected under similar conditions in southern states with basically a rural orientation. Although generalizations to other AFDC or deprived populations are questionable at this time, the findings have enabled the development of several propositions which may serve as a basis for future research. These are presented as a part of the following section.

Implications for Future Research

Although a considerable amount of empirical research has been done in the area of mobility a general implication of this study for the researcher stresses the need for attention to be given both at the theoretical and empirical levels to the process by which the individual in a social milieu acquires the psychological resources necessary for individual mobility. Attention to community organization and interaction of individual and social setting is also warranted.

In terms of low-income populations, several propositions underlying future research have stemmed from the findings of this study as they were evaluated in light of prior knowledge.

> Proposition 1: Mobility potential is related to the level of adjustment to present life situation; those who are not adjusted have greater mobility potential than those who are.
>
> Proposition 2: Aspirations of individuals who are adjusted to their life situation tend to be lower than is realistically necessary while aspirations of non-adjusted individuals are unrealistically high.

Proposition 3: Socialization patterns are related to adjustment to life situation. A stable, but severely deprived environment, is more conducive to adjustment than a non-stable situation and may impair mobility rather than encourage it.

Proposition 4: The rural-urban factor influences educational achievements and aspirations for children. Those in rural settings tend to have lower achievements and aspirations.

Methodologically, the study has provided an opportunity to test an index of mobility potential which appears to be a predictively useful tool for research on similar and perhaps dissimilar low-income populations. Also the study has indicated a need for research designs to include data on community structure, social organization, and involvement of the individual in the life of the community.

Implications for Program Planning

During the past few years, the number of poverty programs, nationally and locally sponsored, has increased greatly. Programs have been initiated and enacted, and their effects have been evaluated by sociologists, economists and psychologists. The findings on Mississippi AFDC clients suggest implications for program planning.

The major finding of the study,that adjustment to life situation reduces mobility potential, indicates a need for channels within the community other than the family for imparting to children during the socialization period, aspirational and motivational drives to achieve. Implicit here is the need for programs to focus not only on the individual, but on the community organization as well. Associational outlets such as school, church and service groups could serve in this capacity.

It is also suggested by the findings that the present system of welfare administration may be conducive to adjustment to life situation. Stress may be placed on conformity to institutional rules and regulations

which favor those who are adjusted to the welfare life and behave as 'model' welfare clients, rather than those who are more mobility prone but more difficult as welfare clients.

And for this reason, that the individual with mobility potential may be negatively oriented toward welfare and prefer not to be identified with its services, consideration should be given to the advisability of poverty programs being a part of general community development efforts within the community.

Lastly, an implication of the AFDC study involves the possible effects of ad hoc type programs. Benefits and rewards of such programs may be beneficial during the time the program is on going, but once the program ceases, if follow-up procedures are not employed, it is not unlikely that any progress made during the course of the program will be lost in regression to prior status, and a tendency for resignation and despair to set in. Therefore, consideration could be given to the development of therapeutic efforts with long-range goals and benefits.

The observations made on the basis of these findings are, at least in part, speculative in nature. Any real test of the merit of this interpretation for research or program planning will come only with future scientific investigation and its evaluation.